

Amendments to the Claims:

The following **Listing of Claims** will replace all earlier versions and listings of the claims.

Listing of Claims:

1. (**Currently amended**) An in vitro method for the determination of the formation of endothelins in a human patient suspected of a disease selected from the group consisting of cardiovascular disease, ~~inflammation, and sepsis and cancer,~~ wherein the formation of endothelin-1 (SEQ ID NO.:2) and big endothelin-1 (SEQ ID NO.: 3) is determined by detecting a C-terminal fragment of preproendothelin-1 (SEQ ID NO.: 1), the method comprising:
 - obtaining a whole blood, plasma or serum sample from the patient;
 - contacting said sample with first antibodies that specifically bind to a first ~~epitope~~ peptide within amino acids 168-212 of preproendothelin-1 and second antibodies that specifically bind to a second ~~epitope-peptide~~ within amino acids 168-212 of preproendothelin-1, one of said first and second antibodies being labeled with a detectable marker, wherein the level of ~~a said~~ C-terminal fragment detected by said first and second antibodies correlates with the level of formation of endothelin-1 (SEQ ID NO:2) or big endothelin-1 (SEQ ID NO:3) in said patient.
- 2-4. (**Canceled**)
5. (**Currently amended**) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein said first and second antibodies bind to two different ~~regions-peptides~~ peptides of preproendothelin-1 selected from peptides consisting of amino acids 168-181, 184-203 and 200-212 of preproendothelin-1.

6. (**Currently Amended**) The method of claim 1, wherein said method provides for the quantitative or semiquantitative determination of ~~a~~the C-terminal fragment of preproendothelin-1 comprising amino acids 168-212 of preproendothelin-1.
7. (**Previously Presented**) The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein said determination is an immunochromatographic point-of-care test.
8. (**Previously Presented**) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second antibodies used for the determination are selected from monoclonal antibodies, affinity-purified polyclonal antibodies, or a combination of monoclonal and affinity-purified antibodies.
9. (**Currently Amended**) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second antibodies are obtained by immunizing an animal with a synthetic peptide consisting of amino acids 168-181, 184-203 or 200-212 of preproendothelin-1.
10. (**Currently Amended**) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of said first and second antibodies is bound to a solid phase.
11. (**Currently Amended**) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first and second antibodies are present in dispersed form in a liquid reaction mixture, a first detectable marker being bound to the first antibody, and a second detectable marker being bound to the second antibody so that, after binding of both antibodies to the terminal fragment of preproendothelin-1, to be detected to form an analyte/antibody complex, a measurable signal which permits detection of the complexes in the measuring solution is generated.
12. (**Previously Presented**) The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the detectable marker comprises rare earth cryptates or chelates in combination with a fluorescent or chemiluminescent dye.

13. **(Previously Presented)** The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said disease is sepsis.
14. **(Original)** The method as claimed in claim 13, which is carried out as part of a multiparameter determination, in which at least one further parameter relevant to sepsis diagnosis is determined simultaneously.
15. **(Original)** The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the further parameter or parameters relevant for sepsis diagnosis is or are selected from the group which consists of anti-ganglioside antibodies, the proteins calcitonin, CA 125, CA 19-9, S100B, S100A proteins, LASP-1, soluble cytokeratin fragments, in particular CYFRA 21, TPS and/or soluble cytokeratin-1 fragments (sCY1F), the peptides inflammin and CHP, fragments of the prohormones pro-ANP, pro-BNP or pro-ADM, glycine-N-acyltransferase (GNAT), carbamoylphosphate synthetase 1 (CPS 1) and C-reactive protein (CRP) or fragments thereof.
16. **(Currently Amended)** The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said cardiovascular disease is ~~cardiovascular diseases~~ selected from the group consisting of atherosclerosis, heart failure, cardiac infarction and pulmonary arterial hypertension.
17. **(Previously Presented)** The method as claimed in claim 16, which is carried out as part of a multiparameter determination, in which further parameters relevant to cardiocascular disease are determined simultaneously.
- 18-19. **(Cancelled)**
20. **(Withdrawn)** An antibody which binds specifically to peptides which consist of the amino acid sequences which correspond to the amino acids 168-181, 184-203 and 200-212 of preproendothelin-1.

21. (**Withdrawn**) The antibody as claimed in claim 20, which is an affinity-purified polyclonal antibody or monoclonal antibody.
22. (**Withdrawn**) A kit for carrying out a method as claimed in claim 1, which comprises at least: (a) a first antibody as claimed in either of claims 20 and 21, (b) a second, different antibody as claimed in either of claims 20 and 21, one of the antibodies being marked and the other being immobilized or immobilizable, and (c) a standard peptide which has an amino acid sequence which comprises at least the amino acids 168-203 or 168-212 of preproendothelin.
23. (**Withdrawn**) The kit as claimed in claim 22, wherein the immobilized antibody is present in immobilized form on the walls of a test tube (CT).
24. (**Currently Amended**) A method for determining the level of endothelin formation in a human patient suspected of a disease selected from the group consisting of cardiovascular disease, ~~inflammation, and sepsis and cancer~~, wherein the level of endothelin formation is determined by measuring the level of a C-terminal fragment of preproendothelin-1, the method comprising:
 - obtaining a whole blood, plasma or serum sample from the patient;
 - contacting said sample with first antibodies that specifically bind to a first ~~epitope-peptide~~ within amino acids 168-212 of preproendothelin-1 and second antibodies that specifically bind to a second ~~epitope-peptide~~ within amino acids 168-212 of preproendothelin-1, one of said first and second antibodies being labeled with a detectable marker; and
 - measuring the level of a the C-terminal fragment of preproendothelin-1 detected by said first and second antibodies, wherein the level of C-terminal fragment detected by said first and second antibodies correlates with the level of endothelin-1 formation in said patient.